

First Mondays

Monthly Notes for Virginia's Adult Education Providers

November 2, 2015

Calendar

**CCRS Teacher
Leadership Institute
November 5-6
Richmond**

**Ability to Benefit
Webinar
November 9**

A Case for Taking up the Gauntlet

BY Joanne Huebner, Assistant Manager, Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center

In a September 24, 2015 U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education blog post, *"Throwing Down the Gauntlet for Professional Development,"* Johan Uvin and Gail Spangenberg state:

It is time to throw down the gauntlet for PD. A serious conversation and commitment to Adult Education professional development is long overdue. We should be talking more extensively and with higher-level commitment about the conditions we need to create for work and learning in our field, for the good of adult learners and our nation. All the more so as we work together to prepare for a full and robust implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The post recognizes the challenges we face with adult educator recruitment, retention, compensation, support policies, and practices. But it also recognizes that adult educators need career pathways and effective support through feedback and coaching. Career Pathways is a key strategy in WIOA, yet we have not had significant conversation about pathways for our own field. What would a career pathway model in Virginia look like? Uvin and Spangenberg note, "Career pathway models cannot be based exclusively on occupational progression, but the idea of developing career pathways based on mastery of specialized skill sets."

This Thursday and Friday (November 5 & 6, 2015), Regional Program Specialists and teacher leaders will participate in the inaugural CCRS Teacher Leadership Institute, hosted by the Office of Adult Education and Literacy and the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center. Participants will spend two days immersed in College & Career Readiness Standards in Action. When they leave the Institute, these adult educators will possess a "specialized skill set," one they will use to lead CCRS initiatives in their regions. Professional development events such as this are one example of how career pathways for adult educators can be delivered.

GED® Stats

2015

GED accounts - 16,549

Test takers - 5,219

Completers - 2,517

Passers - 1,881

State pass rate – 75%

National pass rate – 66%

Money Matters

The grant awards for reallocated 2014-2015 AEFLA funds have been mailed and are posted in OMEGA.

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Just as a single class does not provide the complete career pathway for our adult learners, professional development events provided through the VALRC or by a region are not the only vehicles for moving along an adult educator career pathway. Adult learners must study; they must practice their new skills and seek opportunities to use them authentically. They must invest their own time and energy to advance along their career pathways. We expect this of our learners, and we empower them to do so. Likewise, adult educators should be empowered to take on their own career development.

Michele Martin, in her blog post "[*The Problem of Building Your Career Based on What's Required*](#)," (October 13, 2015) talks about a "what's required" vs. "what's possible" approach to moving along a career pathway: "As workers, when we build our careers on what's required, we can be so consumed with following "the rules" and instructions that we miss how the world is changing around us." Professional development "requirements" for programs receiving funding through the Office of Adult Education and Literacy include a plan "that ensures 100 percent of adult education program managers, teachers, and data management staff from OAE-funded programs participate annually in quality professional development that supports continuous program improvement..." But WIOA is changing the world around us. What is required is not enough.

People who approach career development from "possibility," according to Martin, "know and honor their sparks and their strengths." They ask themselves what new trends and big issues are showing up and how they could integrate them into their own career path, and they ask what experiences and education they need to evolve and grow in the ways that are most meaningful and important for them. What can be done to assist adult educators in creating professional development plans (required) that are both meaningful to their career development and effective in program improvement (possibility)?

Professional development plays a key role in transitioning to WIOA and realizing the vision of AEFLA as a partner in the workforce development system. In investigating models for career pathways for adult educators, we should consider both occupational progression and mastery of specialized skill sets. We are doing this as we develop career pathway "tiers" for adult learners in Virginia; we should do no less for adult educators. We should consider both what is *required* under WIOA and what is *possible* under WIOA. Uvin and Spangenberg's blog asserts, "Our learners deserve a stable and effective teacher and leader workforce. Responsible teachers and learners deserve greater respect, visibility, opportunity, and compensation." Can we take up the gauntlet?

WIOA

Resources for WIOA
Information

[OCTAE](#)

[Department of Labor](#)

[National Skills Coalition](#)

[Federal Register](#)

A Framework for Raising Expectations and Rigor for English Language Learners

This month I'd like to draw your attention to a resource in the LINCS collection that may be of interest, particularly to adult education programs serving English language learners - [*A Framework for Raising Expectations and Instructional Rigor for English Language Learner Students.*](#)

This K12 resource was developed by the Council of the Great City Schools, which is a membership organization of 67 of the nations' largest urban public school districts. The review of the publication posted on the LINCS Web site emphasizes the potential value of the resource for guiding adult ESOL instruction toward the rigor necessary to prepare adult English language learners for college and careers.

According to the LINCS review:

"The resource describes how the needs of ELLs can be met within the framework of English Language Arts/Literacy [Common Core State Standards]. It provides:

- A new vision for English language development
- The provision of examples of instructional delivery models
- Step-by-step guidance for selecting instructional materials that will accelerate the acquisition of academic language and grade-level content for all English learners.

This resource is unusual in that it offers a framework for evaluating curriculum both for its alignment to college and career readiness (CCR) standards and for its suitability with ELLs. It addresses all the key instructional advances in light of special procedures and supports that should be considered for an ELL population. It does not back away from the high expectations of the CCR standards for ELLs, and it clearly describes what sorts of language supports should be built in to materials designed to be effective for ELLs.

The framework for ELL resource alignment can be used by adult educators who are trying to evaluate curriculum materials for both their suitability to ELL students and their degree of alignment to the CCR standards. The clear criteria for assessing resources could be used program wide to ensure consistency in the quality and appropriateness of materials across a program or state. The resource can also be used by individual teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their ELL materials. This could be especially important for adult education programs as individual teachers are more likely to make their own decisions about

OAEL

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Please visit the OAEL

Web site for more information about adult education and literacy in Virginia and for news and updates throughout the month.

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which instructional materials and resources to use in their classrooms.”

This may be a useful resource as we strive to increase the rigor of instruction for English language learners.

Ability to Benefit Webinar

EVENT DESCRIPTION

Access to financial aid plays a huge role in students’ ability to access, persist in, and complete postsecondary education, especially for those students without a high school diploma or its equivalent. In December 2014, Congress partially restored the [Ability to Benefit](#) (ATB) provision of the Higher Education Act. Under this provision, otherwise-eligible students who do not have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, but who are enrolled in eligible career pathway programs, may qualify for federal financial aid. This restoration provides a great opportunity for the thousands of students who will now be able to pursue postsecondary education and training in community and technical colleges, or four-year colleges, and attain the credentials that are necessary for careers in high-demand occupations. Now that ATB is restored for students in eligible career pathway programs, it is critical that we do everything we can to help students in these programs access these resources.

In this webinar you will learn:

- What is Ability to Benefit?
- Who is eligible for Ability to Benefit?
- What are the two primary ways to help your students qualify for ATB and access financial aid for college pathway programs?
- What constitutes an “eligible” career pathway program?
- Where to find the list of approved ATB tests for students to qualify for ATB

Staff from the U.S. Department of Education will provide guidance on how students can qualify. In addition, state and community college officials will share examples of how Ability to Benefit can support low-income, underprepared students. Webinar date and time is November 9 at 3 p.m. Register for the webinar by clicking [here](#). Login information for the event will be sent to registered attendees prior to the event. Please register by November 6.

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